THE BOROUGH OF DELAWARE WATER GAP VILLAGE STUDY









ADOPTED on May ______, 2013



Acknowledgements

The Delaware Water Gap Borough Council

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Ad Hoc Delaware Water Gap Village Study Committee

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On the Cover (clockwise from upper left): Historic Castle Inn, Deer Head Inn, Antoine Dutot Museum and Gallery, and Cherry Creek.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



INTRODUCTION

Project Background

The Borough of Delaware Water Gap is situated in southeast Monroe County, Pennsylvania adjacent to the gap between the Appalachian Mountains where the Delaware River flows. Interstate 80 and

Route 611 pass through the Borough, which encourages easy accessibility from all directions. New York and New Jersey are approximately 1-1.5 hours driving time to the east, and Philadelphia is approximately 1.5 hours driving time to the south.

To New York & New Jersey

Smithfield Township

Delaware Water Gap Borough

Map 1: Regional Map

In addition to convenient transportation accessibility, the Borough boasts access to the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and the Appalachian Trail. The combination of these two attributes makes the Borough a potentially attractive tourist destination. The purpose of this Study is to capitalize on this potential and create a plan which will enhance the commercial core of the Borough while preserving its small-town character.

The Borough of Delaware Water Gap has benefited from its regional setting and surrounding natural beauty since the Borough was settled 1793. By the 1820's visitors were arriving in the Borough to enjoy the scenery and in 1829 construction of one of the first hotels in the Borough was begun¹, thus the establishment of Delaware Water Gap as a resort community.

The Gap enjoyed a national reputation for its resorts and dew prominent financiers, politicians, and society people from the time of the Civil War until World War I. Tough economic times of the 1930's proved too high for the Water Gap's resorts to overcome. Many of the small boarding houses were converted into private residences. Most of the old hotels were either destroyed by fire, were closed, or continued to operate as best they could under changed conditions.

Today, Delaware Water Gap is a quaint residential borough with a modest downtown main street. Through a grant administered by Monroe County, the Borough sought to develop a Village Study to reenergize the area as a tourist destination and revitalize the local economy.

The Village Study is intended to serve as a design standard and a guideline for future community development and improvements within the Borough of Delaware Water Gap. It will serve as a "tool" for the Borough, business owners, residents, and design professionals who seek to establish or upgrade facilities within the downtown area. Narrative information and images describe the existing conditions and discuss options designed to bring about the desired goals. At the end of the Study, appendices have been provided to illustrate the proposed improvements in the form of design elements and construction details.

The intent is for Delaware Water Gap to use this study in conjunction with making decisions about planning and design associated with future land development and other projects within the Borough. In addition, the Borough will also be able to use this study to target specific improvement projects for implementation, and business owners, residents and organizations can use this study as a guideline for the implementation of their own improvement projects.

This document is a working document that is intended to be used by Delaware Water Gap in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan, the Zoning Ordinance, the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, the Eastern Monroe Regional Open Space and Recreation Plan and other planning documents.

Study Elements

¹ Delaware Water Gap: History. http://www.dutotmuseum.com/history

Study Area

The overall study area includes the Main Street (Route 611) from the Deer Head Inn to Broad Street, and Broad Street from the intersection with Main Street to Interstate 80. This area encompasses the bulk of Delaware Water Gap's commercial downtown.

Map 2: Study Area



Steering Committee and Public Participation

At the onset of this project a group of proactive community residents, representing a diversified contingent of the Borough, volunteered to be a part of the Village Study Steering Committee. Committee members include representatives from the Borough Council, the Planning Commission, the area Chamber of Commerce, residents involved with historic preservation and open space, and the County.

To demonstrate their commitment to this process the steering committee adopted the following mission statement:

"The steering committee, as representatives of the local governing body, area residents and business owners; is tasked with providing a community perspective throughout this study process. The steering committee will ensure the study focuses on the improvement of the quality of life for Delaware Water Gap residents by encouraging the revitalization of the Borough and promoting a sense of personal investment by local residents into their community."

In addition to providing continual input throughout this project, the steering committee was integral in reaching out to Borough residents and bringing people out to a Community Visioning Session, which was held at the Church on the Mountain on November 13, 2012. Approximately 30 people, excluding Borough Council members and steering committee members, participated by breaking up into groups and providing answers to a series of questions. The questions were as follows:

- Currently, what do you like most about Delaware Water Gap Borough?
- Currently, what do you like least about Delaware Water Gap Borough?
- What would you want to preserve/maintain in/about Delaware Water Gap Borough for the future?
- What would you want to change about/in Delaware Water Gap Borough for the future?

Using the Nominative Group Technique each individual was given an opportunity to provide an answer to each question, which was then recorded and voted upon by all group members. The top three priorities within each group were used to

determine key needs and desires regarding the Borough. The key component to this technique is that each person present has a chance to offer input and each opinion is recorded. Each member of the group is given a set number of votes per question. A participant can put all their votes in any combination on any of the responses (i.e., all votes on one response, or one vote each on a number of responses.) What emerges are clusters of interest and a general idea of consensus, even when outwardly, people appear to be in disagreement. For the complete results of the Visioning Session please refer to Appendix B.

The overall reaction and responses to the questions indicated that residents like the historic, small town character of the Borough but are concerned with the lack of appropriate businesses needed to sustain a vital community. What residents appeared to like most about the Borough, in addition to its character, is its accessibility to major metropolitan areas, the natural beauty of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, and the Borough's thriving arts culture. When asked what they liked least about the Borough residents agreed that the appearance of Main Street is subpar and that businesses are not being encouraged to locate in the Borough. There was also a concern regarding crime and safety. Residents want to maintain the existing sense of community through the preservation of historic features, arts festivals, and connections to the Delaware River, trails and parks. Streetscape improvements and providing incentives to encourage business development along Main Street are what residents envision for the future of the Borough.



Photo 1: Community Visioning Session



Photo 2: Nominative Group Technique voting

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Demographics

Delaware Water Gap is a small borough with a total area of approximately 2.0 square miles. At the time of the 2010 Census, the population of the Borough was 746 people, 351 households, and 193 families. The median age for residents of the Borough was 42 years old with 16.8% under the age of 18, 70.5% from 18 to 64, and 12.7% who were 65 years of age or older.²

The total number of housing units located within Delaware Water Gap was 394. Single-family detached dwellings accounted for approximately 60% of the total housing units, while multi-family dwellings accounted for approximately 39% of the total housing units. The remaining 1% were single-family attached dwellings. Over 50% of those housing units were built prior to 1940.³

Of the 394 housing units located in the Borough, 323 or 82% of those units are occupied, with an almost even split between the units being owner occupied and renter occupied.

In the Borough, of the population 16 years and over, approximately 68% are employed. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of employed residents commute an average of 30 minutes to work each day. From this we can infer that the majority of residents work outside the Borough.

Land Use and Zoning

The predominant land use in the Borough of Delaware Water Gap is cultural and/or recreational uses. This use amounts to over 540 acres and includes the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area.



Photo 3: Signage along Route 611

Vacant land is the next largest land use within the Borough with approximately 220 acres. The largest portion of that land being owned by the Borough and located along Old U.S. Route 611.

However, further north along Route 611, as you enter the downtown area, the Borough becomes more developed. Here the predominant land use is residential accounting for just over 100 acres, followed by resorts and camps accounting for approximately 70 acres.

Commercial uses account for approximately 13 acres throughout the Borough, of which almost 9 acres is located within the study area of this report. In addition to this 9 acres of commercial use, approximately 13 acres of residential use is located within the study area boundary. The following table summarizes the different land uses located within the study area.

² U.S. Census Bureau. American Fact Finder. 2010 Census.

³ U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey: 2006-2010.

Table 1: Land Uses in Study Area

Land Use	Acres
Cultural and Recreational	0.886
Municipal Services	3.842
Industrial	19.246
Residential	13.081
Commercial	15.61
Vacant	17.952

Residential land uses include both recently constructed dwellings and dwellings that were built as early as the early 1900's. Many different types of residential units are located within the Borough, as well as within the study area. Unit types range from single-family detached dwellings, to twin units, to rowhomes/townhomes and apartment buildings, to mixed use structures with businesses on the ground floor and apartments above. Residential dwellings are located on lots anywhere between one-tenth of an acre to over 2 acres. However, within the study area the average lot size for residential dwellings is a quarter of an acre.

Building styles and distance from the road varies. It appears residential dwellings, specifically single-family detached dwellings, are situated farther back from the road while multi-family dwelling units and/or mixed use structures are situated closer to the road.



Photo 4: Single-family detached dwelling



Photo 5: Twin/multi-family units



Photo 6: Mixed use structure



Photo 7: Sycamore Grill restaurant

A variety of commercial land uses are present within the Borough study area, including restaurants, a local bake shop, inns and taverns, an auto and cycle shop, professional offices, and recreational outfitters.

Institutional uses include the Delaware Water Gap Post Office, the Presbyterian Church of the Mountain, and the Antoine Dutot Museum and Gallery.

The Borough contains a wide variety of land uses within close proximity to each other, which creates many opportunities for interaction between residents, businesses and institutions.

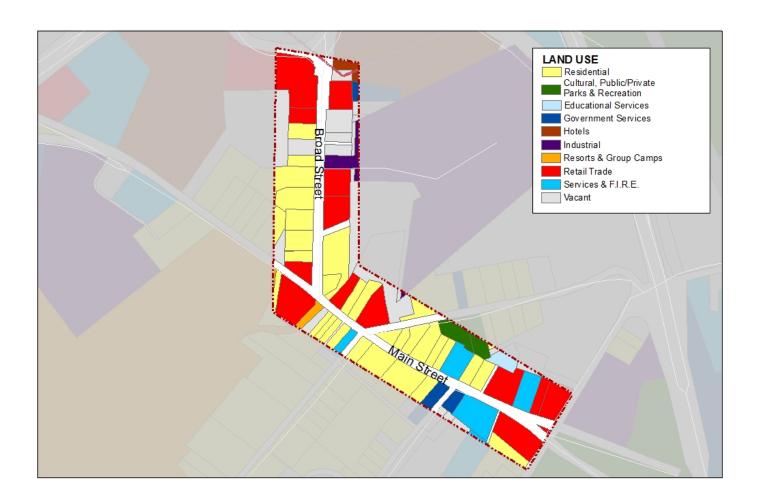


Photo 8: Recreational outfitter



Photo 9: Church of the Mountain

Map 3: Existing Land Uses



The study area is located within the VC-1 Village Commercial Residential District and the VC-2 Village Center Business District.

A small southern portion of the study area is within the VC-1 District. The intent of this zoning district according to the Delaware Water Gap Zoning Ordinance is:

"To establish and preserve areas for commercial and resort facilities which are in close proximity to the major highway traveling public. These uses should minimize and/or buffer the incompatible portion of their activities from any nearby residential uses."

Residential uses such as single-family detached and two-family units are permitted by-right within this district. Apartments and planned residential cluster developments, and planned mobile home developments are permitted by Conditional Use. Forestry and parks are permitted by-right. Other permitted by-right include: general commercial uses, limited industrial uses and essential services. Uses permitted by Special Exception include: resort development, commercial indoor recreation, outdoor recreation, moderate scale home occupation, and conversions. Outdoor sports and recreation is permitted by Conditional Use.

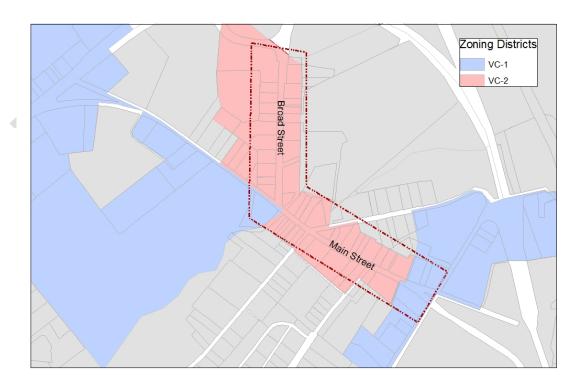
The minimum required lot size in the VC-1 District is 22,500 square feet, with an average minimum lot area per dwelling unit of 7,500 square feet. Minimum required yards are 30 feet for front and rear yards and 20 feet for each side yard. The minimum required lot width is 100 feet.

The majority of the study area is within the VC-2 District. The intent of this zoning district according to the Delaware Water Gap Zoning Ordinance is:

"To establish and preserve a compact business-related center while respecting the historic character of the buildings and the necessary ingredients for a hospitable, residential living environment within this Village Center Business District. The business and service commercial uses permitted will be suited primarily for the needs of travelers, tourists and vacationers. However, local commercial needs may also be accommodated."

Similar to the VC-1 District, residential uses such as single-family detached and two-family units are permitted by-right within this district. Apartments and planned residential cluster developments are permitted by Conditional Use. Forestry and parks are permitted by-right. Other uses permitted by-right include: general commercial uses and essential services. Uses permitted by Special Exception include: moderate scale home occupation, institutional uses, appropriate public uses and conversions.

The minimum required lot size in the VC-2 District is 4,500 square feet, with an average minimum lot area per dwelling unit of 4,500 square feet. Minimum required yards are 10 feet for front yards, 20 feet for rear yards and 6 feet for each side yard. The minimum required lot width is 35 feet.



Map 4: Existing Zoning

Vehicular Circulation

The main commercial corridor of the Borough of Delaware Water Gap is concentrated along Main Street (SR 611). The Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance does not provide a street classification chart. However, based on definitions found in the Ordinance it seems Main Street would be classified as a major street. A major street is defined as those streets "...which serve internal County movements and provide connections between traffic generators serving or anticipated to serve moderately heavy traffic volumes at a design speed of sixty (60) miles per hour." While the majority of this definition appears to apply to Main Street, the travel speeds does not seem to suit this road. The posted speed limit is 25 mph which is more appropriate for vehicles traveling through the downtown area. Even so, traffic routinely travels much faster than this, presenting a perceived hazard to the surrounding Borough pedestrians.

A smaller portion of the Borough's commercial businesses are located along Broad Street. Broad Street would be classified as a collector. A collector street is defined as those streets "...which intercept local streets, provide access to abutting properties and serve individual neighborhoods or areas and their function is to collect and distribute traffic to the local streets and to feed traffic into the major streets. They are anticipated to serve moderate traffic volumes and shall have a design speed of forty-five (45) miles per hour." Broad Street is also posted at 25 mph and provides access onto I-80, an east-west expressway.

While it does not appear that there are any extensive traffic issues within the Borough, it is clear that in order to promote pedestrian accessibility additional accommodations and safety measures especially at intersections are necessary.



Photo 10: Main Street



Photo 11: Broad Street



Photo 12: Pedestrian crossing



Photo 13: Sidewalk along Main Street

Pedestrian Circulation

The downtown area of Delaware Water Gap is fortunate to have in place a fairly well connected pedestrian network. Main Street has sidewalks along both sides of the street, while Broad Street has a sidewalk along the south side of the street where the majority of businesses are located. There are several delineated pedestrian crosswalks at intersections and, as can be noted in Photo 10, there are pedestrian crossing signs to promote safe pedestrian movement and discourage excessive speeds along the main roads.

In addition to sidewalks, there are numerous opportunities for trails and walking paths - both existing and proposed.

While pedestrian facilities are available there is always room for improvements. Existing crosswalks should be repainted, additional pedestrian crossing signs should be placed along Main Street, and sidewalks should be kept clear of obstructions. In addition, it should be noted that visibility may pose some pedestrian safety concerns along Main Street. In certain spots it is difficult to see oncoming traffic due to hills and curves characteristic of SR 611 through the region. Fat moving traffic as well as a lack of clear visibility and other safety features make pedestrian travel along main roadways dangerous.

Public Transportation

The Monroe County Transit Authority (MCTA) Pocono Pony provides public transportation throughout the County and neighboring communities. MCTA offers four public fixed routes as well as a shared ride program.

Currently the Yellow Route provides access to the Borough. This route has stops in Stroudsburg, East Stroudsburg, Marshalls Creek, Delaware Water Gap Borough, Fernwood, and the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. Passengers are also able to transfer in Stroudsburg to other routes.

The shared ride program assists users to access public transportation when a public fixed route is not possible. This program is available to users living more than a quarter mile from any public fixed routes or to those passengers who are unable to use the fixed route buses due to a disability.

In addition to these programs, MCTA provides three out of county loops; the North Loop provides transportation to Wilkes-Barre/Scranton, the South Loop provides transportation to Allentown/Bethlehem, and the Pike Loop provides transportation to Milford/Hawley.

Historic Resources

The Borough of Delaware Water Gap was settled in 1793 by Antoine Dutot. The natural beauty of the Gap began to draw people traveling through the area. Dutot began construction on a small hotel overlooking the Delaware River in 1829. After the eventual success of this first hotel new hotels began to sprout and become established in the Borough. Delaware Water Gap developed a national reputation for its resorts.

Access to the Borough was accomplished by road, trolley and rail. In 1823 a state road was constructed providing access through the Gap. The Mountain View Line was the trolley line which connected the Borough to Stroudsburg. Additional trolley lines was established connecting the Gap with the Lehigh Valley region and even as far south as Upper Darby, in the Philadelphia area. Original rail access was provided by the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad. The first train trips from New York to Delaware Water Gap were a six-hour excursion.

The Borough of Delaware Water Gap has a number of historic resources still standing today including the Deer Head Inn, the Glenwood, the Dutot Museum and Gallery, the Castle Inn and the Delaware Water Gap Station.

Streetscape Elements

Along with pedestrian sidewalks a number of other streetscape elements are employed to improve the character of the main commercial corridor.

A number of street trees are present within the Borough. Many are located within the designated right-of-way along Main Street. The presence of street trees creates an established, traditional feel to the Borough.



Photo 14: Street trees along Main Street

Lighting is another element that can create a traditional feel if the appropriate fixtures are used and applied properly. Street lighting along Main Street incorporates cobrahead style street lights as well as the more appealing lantern style street lights. Other lighting fixtures include those used to illuminate signs and standards located in front of individual houses and businesses.

The implementation of standards for street lighting, facade lighting and sign lighting would assist with enhancing the look and feel of the main street area.



Photo 15: Cobrahead style light fixture



Photo 16: Lantern style light fixture

Signage

A number of styles of signage are present within the Borough. The styles range from modern to more traditional looking signs located on buildings, in front of buildings, in building windows and hanging from buildings as well. Similar to lighting, the implementation of a set of standards would improve the appearance of the commercial corridor.



Photo 17: Hanging sign



Photo 18: Freestanding sign



Photo 19: Wall sign



Photo 20: Window sign

Other Details

Like many other Boroughs and Villages, Delaware Water Gap is full of details that identify and reinforce the small town character of the Borough. Following are examples of some of these details throughout the Borough:



Photo 21: Planter



Photo 22: Gateway sign



Photo 23: Wall



Photo 24: Memorial



Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives are intended to be used as guides for the future development of the commercial corridor within the Borough of Delaware Water Gap.

<u>Goals</u> are general statements that reflect the overall vision of the Borough residents, property owners and board members as to what direction Delaware Water Gap Borough should take in the future.

Objectives are mini goals which will aide the Borough in fulfilling the major goals as they were compiled through the cooperation of residents, property owners, the steering committee, the Borough Council and the Planning Commission.

Goal 1: Maintain a strong small town identity and high quality of life for residents of the Borough.

Objectives:

- Maintain and encourage a sense of community among Village residents;
- Continue to support and program a variety of community events for residents of the Borough and surrounding community;
- Develop and maintain a walkable community;
- Improve and maintain safety and security for Borough residents and property owners.

Goal 2: Create a cohesive village identity and maintain Borough history.

Objectives:

- Continue to support Delaware Water Gap Chamber of Commerce;
- Promote and publicize Borough businesses, activities and other positive aspects of Delaware Water Gap;

- Ensure a variety of programming and activities for the Borough and community residents and ensure adequate planning and advertisement of such activities;
- Use programmed activities and events as a means to create publicity for local businesses, institutions, organizations and the Borough in general;
- Implement a variety of seasonal decorations such as banners, lighting, landscaping, or signs that complement the small town feel of the Borough and draw attention to the Borough focal points and upcoming activities;
- Implement a palette of design standards for sidewalks, pathways, amenities and public properties so that public improvements match the desired look and feel of the Borough;
- Increase awareness of Borough history through documentation, signage, and historically accurate renovations of important features throughout the Borough.

Goal 3: Plan for appropriate commercial and residential development along Main and Broad Streets.

Objectives:

- Implement a land use plan which clearly defines areas for different types of land uses and the specific land uses to be permitted within the commercial corridor;
- Encourage a thriving mix of commercial uses that provide benefit to the surrounding community and fit within the overall identity of the Borough;
- Encourage a mix of residential land uses including apartments above businesses, and small single-family lots in keeping with the desired look and feel of the Borough;
- Encourage redevelopment of vacant properties and storefronts.

Goal 4: Maintain and encourage a high level of care for properties and the appropriate adaptive reuse of existing structures along the commercial corridor.

Objectives:

- Encourage the adaptive reuse of existing structures along the commercial corridor in a way that emphasizes the traditional look and feel of those existing structures;
- Encourage property owners to rehabilitate and care for abandoned and rundown properties and structures;

Goal 5: Provide safe, comprehensive pedestrian circulation in and around the Borough.

Objectives:

- Improve structural integrity of existing sidewalks along the commercial corridor;
- Improve existing safety features (i.e., crosswalks, signage and lighting) and implement new safety features such as traffic calming measures to ensure the safety of pedestrians;
- Implement measures to reduce traffic speed and increase vehicular safety along Main Street in the Borough;
- Connect any new commercial, residential or other development to existing pedestrian pathways and sidewalks;
- Connect pedestrian pathways and sidewalks to existing and proposed trails and pathways throughout the Borough and the surrounding area.